

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL PALERMO
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INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
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ZEN AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
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SUBJECT: CANDIDATE RUMORED FOR BANK OF SICILY PRESIDENCY

SUMMARY: GIANNINO PARRAVICINI, A NORTHERN BANK OFFICIAL,
IS RUMORED TO BE SLATED FOR THE LONG-EMPTY BANK OF SICILY
PRESIDENCY. THOUGH HIS PROSPECTIVE APPOINTMENT HAS PROMPTED
LOCAL GRUMBLING, CHIEFLY FROM THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS,
IT SEEMS LIKELY PARRAVICINI WILL BE CONFIRMED.

1. THE PRESIDENCY OF THE BANK OF SICILY IS PROBABLY
THIS ISLAND'S KEY POLITICAL/PROFESSIONAL PLUM. IN A
REGION WITH FEW, LARGE LOCALLY-CONTROLLED INDUSTRIES
AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS, THE BANK WIELDS GREAT
POWER AS A SOURCE OF PATRONAGE, INVESTMENT FUNDING
AND AS "TREASURER" OF THE SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.
ITS PRESIDENT ENJOYS A STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT THAT
IS AS UNUSUAL AS IT IS ENVIABLE TO OTHERS. THE BANK'S
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CURRENT ACTING PRESIDENT, CIRO DE MARTINO (NOW 74), HAS
LITERALLY GROWN OLD DURING NEARLY NINE YEARS AS "CHARGE
D'AFFAIRES WHILE THE POLITICAL PARTIES FOUGHT WITHIN AND AMONG
THEMSELVES TO NAME HIS SUCCESSOR.

2. ON JULY 27, WORD LEAKED OUT OF MEETINGS AMONG
MAJORITY PARTY EXPERTS IN ROME THAT GIANNINO

PARRAVICINI HAD BEEN SLOTTED FOR THE BANK OF SICILY PRESIDENCY. A FORMER SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, NOW A REPUBLICAN, PARRAVICINI IS FINISHING HIS TERM AS PRESIDENT OF MEDIOCREDITO CENTRALE A STATE-CONTROLLED, MEDIUM-TERM INVESTMENT BANK. A NATIVE OF VARESE IN NORTHERN ITALY, PARRAVICINI REPORTEDLY HAS HAD LITTLE DIRECT EXPOSURE TO SICILIAN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND NEWS OF HIS RUMORED NOMINATION HAS THEREFORE NOT BEEN HAILED HEREWITH ENTHUSIASM. ALL OF THE ISLAND'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP EXPRESSED SOME DEGREE OF DISGRUNTLEMENT BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN SUMMARILY INFORMED, NOT CONSULTED IN ADVANCE, ABOUT THE PARRAVICINI CANDIDACY. THE FACT THAT HE IS A NORTHERNER HAS ALSO GRATED. THE LOUDEST CRIES OF INJURY AND INSULT HAVE COME FROM SICILY'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WHO HAVE BEEN OPERATING UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE NOMINATION TO THE HIGHLY-PRIZED BANK BILLET WAS AN EXCLUSIVE DC PREROGATIVE. THE LAY PARTIES THOUGHT SO TOO, AND ARE QUIETLY ELATED TO SEE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS NOW DEPRIVED OF THIS IMPORTANT PLUM. THE FEW BANK OF SICILY PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY IN TOWN TO WHOM WE HAVE TALKED SEEM PLEASED THAT ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL EVEN THOUGH A NORTHERNER, HAS WON OUT OVER THE POLITICAL CANDIDACIES THAT HAVE BEEN IN PLAY HERETOFORE. ALL ARE AGREED - POLITICIANS AND PROFESSIONALS ALIKE - THAT PARRAVICINI HAS THE NECESSARY BANKING CREDENTIALS FOR THE JOB.

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3. THE SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A SAY IN THE VETTING PROCESS SINCE PARRAVICINI'S NOMINATION WILL NOT BE FINAL UNTIL THE REGION HAS GIVEN ITS "AGREEMENT". REGIONAL PRESIDENT MATARELLA (DC) HAS SAID HE WOULD OPEN THE NOMINATION TO DISCUSSION IN THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BEFORE DECIDING UP OR DOWN ON PARRAVICINI.

AT THIS WRITING, AND THOUGH THERE WILL BE CONTINUED GRUMBLING AND LAMENTATIONS OF INJURED PRIDE, OUR BEST GUESS IS THAT THE PARRAVICINI APPOINTMENT WILL BE SECONDED BY THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. NOT ONLY DOES IT HAVE THE ADVANTAGES SEEN IN IT BY THE LAY PARTIES, IT MAY ALSO COMMEND ITSELF TO THE DC AFTER THE YEARS OF SELF-INFLICTED DYSPEPSIA THAT THE NOMINATION HAS CAUSED.

4. COMMENT: THE BANK OF SICILY NOMINATION IS SADLY SYMBOLIC OF THE "SICILIAN PROBLEM" TO WHICH LOCAL POLITICIANS MAKE SUCH FREQUENT AND IMPASSIONED REFERENCE. FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS, THE LOCAL POLITICAL MILIEU, AND FIRST WITHIN IT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, HAS BEEN UNABLE TO AGREE ON ITS OWN CANDIDATE - WHETHER SICILIAN OR OTHERWISE. AS USUAL THEREFORE, A SOLUTION HAS BEEN IMPOSED FROM THE NORTH AND

WITH THE DISPATCH OF A NORTHERNER FOR ADDED MEASURE.
UNTIL SICILY CAN GET EFFECTIVELY "OUT IN FRONT" ON THESE AND
OTHER DECISIONS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO IT, THE ISLAND'S
VAUNTED REGIONAL AUTONOMY AND ITS DESIRE FOR A GREATER ROLE
IN ITS OWN DESTINY WILL REMAIN FRUSTRATED.
COLLINS

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